

Frequently Asked Questions

Things you might want to know about us

Why choose Helping Hands Community Care?

We are a smaller, boutique, local service provider. Through our lovely, qualified and thoroughly background checked support workers, we provide high quality services right across all the Launceston suburbs. When you ring our office you will talk to either Billie or Marlene who will get to know you and will know who you are and what your situation is without you having to tell them every time.

But, it's not about us, is it? It's about you!

Help in your home is a very personal thing and it can feel intrusive if not done well. It is, after all, your home - the place where you feel secure and where you have your privacy and can relax. If the help coming in is making you feel invaded or uncomfortable, then it is not really working. Worse still is the situation where the help coming in makes you feel trapped because you don't know exactly when the worker is coming, or who the worker will be.

We can tell you that we are, above all else, a client centred organisation and we have been since before it became mandatory. Our clients (and all our employees) are people, not numbers or units and we take their rights and dignity very seriously. We have only ever offered client directed care from the day we began offering services and this will never change.

What this means is that we listen to you and do our best to organise the best possible services to help you meet your personal goals for remaining independent at home. This might mean providing domestic cleaning services to relieve you of the heavy cleaning tasks which you can no longer safely manage. It may mean assisting you with shopping or social outings, or even doing the shopping on your behalf. It may mean a little help in the garden every now and then to help you keep on top of the heavy tasks. Or, it may be helping you to regain some of your independence through a reablement or wellness program.

Whichever it is, we aim to set up your services so that you know exactly when the worker is coming, because it is the same time on the same day each week or fortnight, and you will know which worker is coming because, aside of when your worker is on leave, it will be the same worker each time unless you request a change. The worker will know what needs to be done because they will have a copy of the Care Plan that was written in consultation with you, so there should be no surprises for you either.

Many years ago now, a group of forward-thinking people put together the guiding principles that we work by. The idea was that we wanted the service to provide the kind of care that we ourselves would like to have when we reached the point where help at home was needed.

You can find out more under our 'About Us' tab.

What services does Helping Hands Community Care provide?

Helping Hands Community Care is primarily an Aged Care Provider, though we do assist a small number of younger people with disabilities.

The types of services we provide include:

- Domestic Assistance (cleaning)
- Individual Social Support (shopping and outings)
- Home and Garden Maintenance

We provide these services under several different funding programs:

- Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)
- Veterans' Home Care Program (VHC)
- Tasmanian HACC Program (HACC)

For more information on what services we provide, look under the "Our Services' tab.

Are your Support Workers trained and safety checked?

Yes. Our Support Workers participate in mandatory training every year including First Aid and CPR and manual handling and other relevant client care modules. Our Support Workers are Police Checked on employment and regularly thereafter.

Will I have the same Support Worker every time?

Mostly, yes. It is always our plan that you get the same Support Worker for each service so that you get to know the one Support Worker. However, even our wonderful Support Workers do occasionally get sick or do need to take a holiday, so in those cases we will offer you another of our lovely Support Workers.

What if I do not like the Support Worker you send to me?

We recognise that sometimes people are just not comfortable in each other's company and this is no different in the home support sector. There doesn't need to be any specific issue, but if you or your family members are not comfortable with the Support Worker, we send you, you only need to contact us, and we will make a change. Our Support Workers are supportive of our procedure to deal with this situation and so there will be no bad feelings if you want to change.

Do I need to provide the cleaning products and equipment?

Yes. For Domestic Assistance (cleaning) services our Support Workers will use your cleaning products and equipment such as a vacuum, mop, bucket and cleaning cloths. They will use whatever cleaning products you have or prefer to be used.

We use contractors for our Home and Garden Maintenance services, and they will bring their own products and equipment.

Are Helping Hands Community Care approved to manage Home Care Packages (HCP)?

No. Helping Hands Community Care is not approved to manage client Home Care Packages.

We are, however, able to provide services to clients who have Home Care Packages. As these packages are planned through Client Directed Care protocols, clients can choose where their services come from. You need only tell the Case Manager or Co-ordinator of your package that you want Helping Hands Community Care to provide your Domestic, Social Support or Home and Garden Maintenance services and they will organise for that to happen.

What does Helping Hands Community Care charge for their services?

Helping Hands Community Care's client fees are set according to the guidelines set out by our funding bodies. Each program has its own fee schedule.

Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)

Domestic Assistance (cleaning)	\$8.00 per hour
Individual Social Support (shopping etc)	\$8.00 per hour + Kilometre Charge if applicable at \$0.78 per kilometre travelled
Home Garden and Maintenance	\$9.00 per hour + Tip Fee if applicable

Veterans' Home Care Program (VHC)

Domestic Assistance (cleaning)	\$5.00 per service
In-home Respite	No Client Fee
Home Garden and Maintenance	\$5.00 per hour

Tasmanian HACC Program

Domestic Assistance (cleaning)	\$5.00 per service
Individual Social Support (shopping etc)	\$5.00 per service + Kilometre Charge if applicable at \$0.78 per kilometre travelled
Home Garden and Maintenance	\$5.00 per service + Tip Fee if applicable

If paying the fees in any of our programs will cause financial hardship, there are policies and procedures in place to address this. It is the view of the funding bodies that no-one should be refused services because they are unable to pay the full client fee. Call Marlene or Billie to discuss this further.

How do I pay for my services?

For most services, you can pay your client fee directly to your Support Worker. All our Support Workers carry receipt books and will write a receipt for you. They also carry time sheets requiring a client signature.

If you have a Domestic Service (cleaning) or Social Support Service from us, you will have one of our Support Workers visiting you. If you also have Home and Garden Maintenance, provided by one of our Contractors, you can also pay the client fee for the Maintenance service direct to your Support Worker the next time they come to see you. Please do not pay the client fee to the contractor.

If you are having green or other waste taken to the tip by the contractor, he or she will negotiate a pro-rata tip fee with you which will be due to be paid before they take the waste away. The tip fee can be paid to the Contractor.

Some of our clients only receive a Home and Garden Maintenance service from us. In this case you will be sent an account for the client fee with instructions on how to pay it. You cannot pay your fee to the Contractor, but you can pay tip fees to the Contractor.

What if I have problems with, or am not happy with my services?

Depending on the kind of problem or complaint you are experiencing, you may firstly want to talk to your Support Worker who will either make some changes to resolve the issue you are having, or will help you connect with management to see if they are able to resolve your problem or complaint with you. You can contact the office on 03-6327 1515.

If you are unable to resolve the problem or complaint with management, then you can contact the My Aged Care call centre to lodge a complaint on 1800 200 422, or you can apply to the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner for assistance with the matter. You can contact the Commissioner on 1800 951 822.

What if I need to cancel a service because I have an appointment?

If you have an appointment, or a social event that clashes with your service in any of our programs, you only need to let us know that you will be unavailable. You can do this by talking to your Support Worker, if you know ahead of time that you will be unavailable. Your Support Worker may be able to arrange another time in the same week, but rescheduling is subject to availability, Your Support Worker will let the office know what is happening on your behalf.

If the appointment or event occurs with short notice, you will need to ring the office as soon as you are able to let us know and we will pass the message on to your Support Worker. Again, if you would like to look at the option of a service later in the same week, we will see if we can oblige either with your regular Support Worker or a relief worker if we have the availability, otherwise you may just need to skip that one service.

Do Helping Hands Community Care keep a Waiting List for services?

No. Helping Hands Community Care is a boutique service and because we are relatively small (though growing), we do not have enough turnover of clients to allow us to keep a waiting list. Larger organisations have a much faster turnover of clients because they have much greater client numbers – therefore some of them (though not all), do keep waiting lists.

What are my rights and responsibilities as a client?

You have the right to:

- safe and high-quality care and services;
- be treated with dignity and respect;
- have my identity, culture and diversity valued and supported;
- live without abuse and neglect;
- be informed about my care and services in a way I understand;
- access all information about myself, including information about my rights, care and services;
- have control over and make choices about my care, and personal and social life, including where the choices involve personal risk;
- have control over, and make decisions about, the personal aspects of my daily life, financial affairs and possessions;
- my independence;

- be listened to and understood;
- have a person of my choice, including an aged care advocate, support me or speak on my behalf;
- complain free from reprisal, and to have my complaints dealt with fairly and promptly;
- personal privacy and to have my personal information protected;
- exercise my rights without it adversely affecting the way I am treated.

Each care recipient also has the following responsibilities:

- to respect the rights of care workers to their human, legal and workplace rights including the right to work in a safe environment;
- to treat care workers without exploitation, abuse, discrimination or harassment.
- to abide by the terms of the written home care agreement;
- to acknowledge that his or her needs may change and to negotiate modifications of care and service if his or her care needs change;
- to accept responsibility for his or her own actions and choices even though some actions and choices may involve an element of risk.
- to give enough information to assist the approved provider to develop, deliver and review a care plan;
- to tell the approved provider and their staff about any problems with the care and services.
- to allow safe and reasonable access for care workers at the times specified in his or her care plan or otherwise by agreement;
- to provide reasonable notice if he or she does not require home care to be provided on a day.
- Each care recipient has the responsibility to pay any fees as specified in the agreement or to negotiate an alternative arrangement with the provider if any changes occur in his or her financial circumstances.

Things You Should Know About the Aged Care System

Do I need a referral from my doctor to get help at home?

No. You don't actually need a referral from your Doctor and having one is not going to speed up the process of getting help. Your Doctor or Practice Nurse could help you to refer yourself to My Aged Care, but it is unlikely to make allocation of Home Support services faster.

Am I eligible to get help at home?

Non-Veterans

For people aged over 65 years (or 50 years of age for Indigenous peoples) who are not Gold or White Card veterans, eligibility is now assessed by the **My Aged Care call centre**. However, if you are over 65 years of age (or 50 years of age for Indigenous peoples) and are finding that you need a little help to stay independent in your own home - then most likely you will be eligible for some help at home. It only takes a phone call from you or someone you trust to help you, to the My Aged Care call centre on 1800 200 422 to get the ball rolling. Or if you have internet access, you can refer yourself online at www.myagedcare.gov.au.

The My Aged Care call centre will assess your eligibility and if you are found eligible, they will do what is necessary to help you move through the system to get the services that you need.

Gold and White Card Veterans

If you are a veteran with a Gold or White Card, you can also self-refer into the **Veterans' Home Care program** on 1300 550 450, or if you prefer, into the Commonwealth Home Support program through the My Aged Care call centre as above.

Again, as for non-veterans, if you are deemed eligible, the assessors of either the Veterans' Home Care Program or The My Aged Care call centre will assist you with moving through the system to get the services that you need.

Younger People Living with Disabilities

If you are a person under 65 years of age living with a disability, and you are not eligible for help through the NDIS, then you may be eligible for help through the Tasmanian HACC Program. Entry into this program begins with a referral to the **Tasmanian Community Care Referral Service** and you can ring them yourself on 1300 769 699 or get someone that you trust to do it for you. If deemed eligible the assessors from this referral service will then help you through the process of getting services into your home.

Information on the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)

What is the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)?

CHSP is a government funded program that supports older people who are still living independently at home, but want some extra assistance, such as domestic cleaning, social support, delivered meals, personal care or home maintenance. The service is subsidised by government, but you must pay some fees.

Many people use CHSP when they need basic, entry level care. As their needs become more complex, requiring some case management assistance, they can be referred for a Home Care Package.

What services does CHSP provide?

The CHSP offers a range of home and community care services including:

- **domestic assistance** – household jobs like cleaning, clothes washing and ironing
- **social support** – social activities in a community-based group setting, Day Centre programs or individual social support to assist with shopping, personal business or social activities
- **transport** – help to get out and about for shopping or appointments *Helping Hands Community Care is not funded to provide general transport services.*
- **personal care** – help with bathing or showering, dressing, hair care and going to the toilet. *Helping Hands Community Care is not funded to provide personal care.*
- **home maintenance** – minor general repair and care of your house or yard, for example, changing light bulbs or replacing tap washers
- **home modification** – minor installation of safety aids such as alarms, ramps and support rails in your home. *Helping Hands Community Care is not funded to provide home modifications.*
- **nursing care** – a qualified nurse comes to your home and may, for example, dress a wound or provide continence advice, *Helping Hands Community Care is not funded to provide nursing care.*
- **respite care** – supporting carers by providing respite care options. *Helping Hands Community Care is not funded to provide respite care.*
- **housing support** – assistance with housing options for vulnerable older people. *Helping Hands Community Care is not funded to provide housing support.*
- **food services** – meals at a community centre; help to shop for, prepare or store food; meal delivery to your home. *Helping Hands Community Care is not funded to provide food services.*
- **allied health support services** – such as physiotherapy, occupational and speech therapy, podiatry, dietician etc. *Helping Hands Community Care is not funded to provide allied health support services.*

What is the My Aged Care call-centre?

The My Aged Care call centre is the Australian Government's phone and website-based assistance service that can help you to access aged care services and find information in one place for yourself or a family member, friend or someone you're caring for.

They can take you step by step through the process. It can be a confusing process. So, if you are [Not sure? Start here.](#)

You can call the My Aged Care contact centre on **1800 200 422**:

- Monday to Friday 8am - 8pm
- Saturdays 10am - 2pm
- Sundays and national public holidays CLOSED

Translating and Interpreting Service: call **131 450** and ask for 1800 200 422.

National Relay Service: visit www.relayservice.gov.au to choose your preferred access point or call the NRS Helpdesk on **1800 555 660**.

You can also email My Aged Care from within the website.

What is the Regional Assessment Team (RAS)?

RAS are the assessors who visit you at home to assess which services you can use under the CHSP. You may need a new assessment each time you want to use a different service under this program. It's a good idea to think about whether you might need to use any of the range of CHSP services in advance, to save you having to go through the whole referral and assessment process again.

Why have I been given a referral code and what do I do now?

When you receive a referral code at or after your RAS Assessment, you will also usually be given a list of potential service provision organisations to ring and enquire if they have capacity to provide you with services. Generally, this means that most if not all service providers in your area are at capacity and it also means that you will probably need to ring around the list of providers and any others that you can think of persistently until you find one to provide some or all of the services that you have been approved for.

What is the difference between Commonwealth Home Support Services (CHSP) and Home Care Packages (HCP)?

Home Care Packages and the CHSP both give you support to stay at home. But there are differences between the programs.

With the CHSP, you:

- choose from a set menu of services – there isn't much flexibility
- only pay for the services you use
- can dip in and out of the program as you need things
- have your eligibility assessed by the Regional Assessment Service (RAS).

With a Home Care Package:

- a case manager or case adviser helps you understand the system and work out a Care Plan that suits your individual needs and preferences

- you get your own funds to use and can decide how to spend it, rather than choosing from a menu
- once you have a package, it stays in place for the long term
- your eligibility is assessed by the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT).

Information on the Veterans' Home Care Program (VHC)

What is the Veterans' Home Care Program (VHC)?

Veterans' Home Care (VHC) is a Department of Veterans' Affairs program designed to help eligible DVA White and Gold Card holders who need an entry level amount of practical assistance to continue living independently in their own home. Available services include Domestic Assistance, Personal Care, Respite Care, and safety-related Home and Garden Maintenance.

What services does VHC provide?

Personal Care - *Helping Hands Community Care is not funded to provide Personal Care.*

Personal Care includes assistance with daily self-care tasks that a person is unable to do without help, such as:

- showering, bathing, toileting;
- dressing, grooming;
- eating;
- application of non-medicated skin care creams and lotions;
- putting on compression stockings, protective bandaging, splints and callipers.
- getting in and out of bed; and
- moving about the house.

Domestic Assistance

Domestic Assistance provides support with basic household tasks that have become difficult for the veteran to do alone and may include:

- internal house cleaning like dishwashing, vacuuming and mopping, bed making and linen changing, clothes washing and/or ironing;
- some assistance with meal preparation (but not total preparation of meals);
- bill paying and unaccompanied shopping; and
- collection and/or cutting of firewood in rural and remote areas.
- chopping/splitting, moving and/or stacking of firewood located on your property in a rural and remote area.

Respite Care

Respite Care relieves a carer who provides ongoing care to another person who is severely incapacitated or frail. These services enable the carer to have a break from the caring role. Respite care may be provided to someone who is:

- a carer of an entitled person;
- an entitled person who is a carer; or
- a self-carer (for residential respite only).

Respite services include:

- In-home Respite Care;
- Residential Respite Care; or
- Emergency Short-Term Home Relief (ESTHR).

Safety-related Home and Garden Maintenance

Safety-related Home and Garden Maintenance services are minor handyman tasks designed to keep the home safe by minimising hazards and may include:

- replacing light bulbs and tap washers;
- changing batteries in smoke/security alarms;
- cleaning gutters, external and internal windows, exhaust fans, air-conditioning, split system units or ceiling fans;
- minor home maintenance (e.g. cupboard door adjustment);
- pruning, grass cutting or weeding (only where a safety hazard exists);
- clearing of debris following natural disasters;
- chopping/splitting, moving and/or stacking of firewood located on your property in a rural and remote area and;
- one-off garden clean ups in specific circumstances where a safety hazards exists (e.g. Fire reduction, mobility limitations).

Safety-related Home and Garden Maintenance services do not include major repairs or services requiring a qualified tradesperson, including for example, gutter replacement, major landscaping or garden tasks such as tree lopping or tree felling/removal.

Garden tasks such as lawn mowing and pruning can only be undertaken if an environmental health or safety hazard exists. Routine, cosmetic or ornamental gardening services such as weeding, maintaining flower beds, regular lawn mowing, or pruning of roses **are not** available under this service.

Information on The Tasmanian HACC Program

What is the Tasmanian HACC Program?

The Tasmanian Home and Community Care (HACC) Program funds community services for younger people with disabilities and their carers. The program is funded by the Tasmanian Government and managed through the Department of Health and Human Services.

The HACC Program delivers services designed to help younger people with a disability and their carers to live independently at home

What services does the Tasmanian HACC Program provide?

There are several services available through the Tasmanian HACC Program and they include the following:

Centre-Based Day Care - *Helping Hands Community Care is not funded to provide Centre-Based Day Care.*

Centre-based group recreational and social activities.

Home Help/Home Care/Domestic Assistance

Domestic chores, including help with cleaning, dishwashing, clothes washing and ironing, shopping and bill paying.

Personal Care - *Helping Hands Community Care is not funded to provide Personal Care.*

Help with daily self-care tasks, such as eating, bathing, toileting, dressing, grooming, getting in and out of bed and moving about the house.

Home Maintenance

Help with the maintenance and repair of a person's home, garden or yard to keep their home in a safe condition.

Home Modification - *Helping Hands Community Care is not funded to provide Home Modifications.*

Changes to a person's home so they can continue to live and move safely about the house, including modifications such as grab rails, handrails, ramps, shower rails and installation of emergency alarms.

Transport - *Helping Hands Community Care is not funded to provide Transport.*

Services for transport disadvantaged people with shopping and keeping appointments and may include travel for social activities and visiting friends.

Food Services - *Helping Hands Community Care is not funded to provide Food Services.*

May be delivered meals, ready to eat or help with food shopping, food storage and preparation.

Community Nursing - *Helping Hands Community Care is not funded to provide Community Nursing.*

These services may be provided in your home or at a community health centre by a qualified nurse. They may be provided to you on a regular or occasional basis.

Allied Health Services - *Helping Hands Community Care is not funded to provide Allied Health Services.*

These services include physiotherapy, podiatry, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and similar services which help people to be mobile and to lead an independent life at home.

Social Support

Many younger people are supported by unpaid carers such as relatives, friends or neighbours. Caring for a younger person with functional disabilities can be extremely demanding, both for the person and the carer, and the carer can become housebound or in need of a break.

Respite - *Helping Hands Community Care is not funded to provide Respite.*

This is a service designed to give carers a break from their caring role. It takes several forms; from care in the home, in a day centre, or in other community settings - whichever options best suit the carer and the person in their care. It can be provided as a planned service or on an emergency basis.